



THE HISTORIC  
**VARIETY  
THEATER**



**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY**

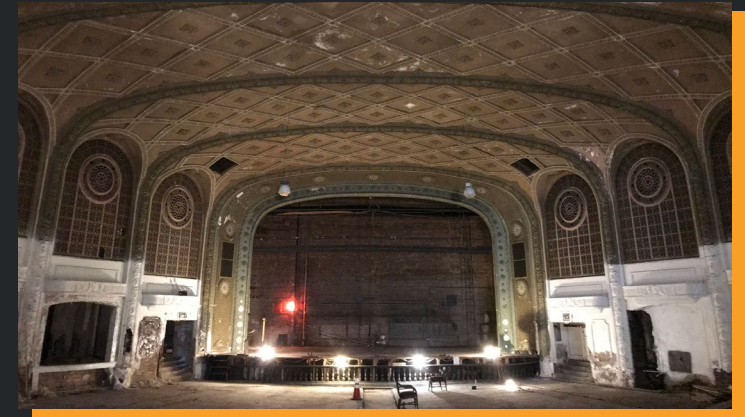
11815-11837 LORAIN AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44111

# VARIETY THEATER

The former Variety Theatre, located at 11815 Lorain Avenue on the near-Westside of Cleveland, presents an exciting opportunity for a mixed-use redevelopment. With its iconic architecture and rich history, the theater is primed for repositioning. As demand for both residential and entertainment spaces continue to grow in Northeast Ohio, transforming the theater into a venue for concerts, events, weddings, and entertainment could fill a critical gap in the mid-market sector.

A key advantage of this project is the property's status as a historic landmark, as well as the approval of a federal historic tax credit (HTC) award (\$1.6 million), a state HTC award (\$1.4 million), and the availability of completed architectural plans. These factors save time and resources, streamlining the development process.

Redeveloping the Variety Theatre into an entertainment venue offers a compelling investment opportunity to restore a historic landmark while meeting the community's evolving needs. This project holds the potential to enrich Cleveland's cultural landscape, generate returns, and preserve the legacy of a cherished institution.

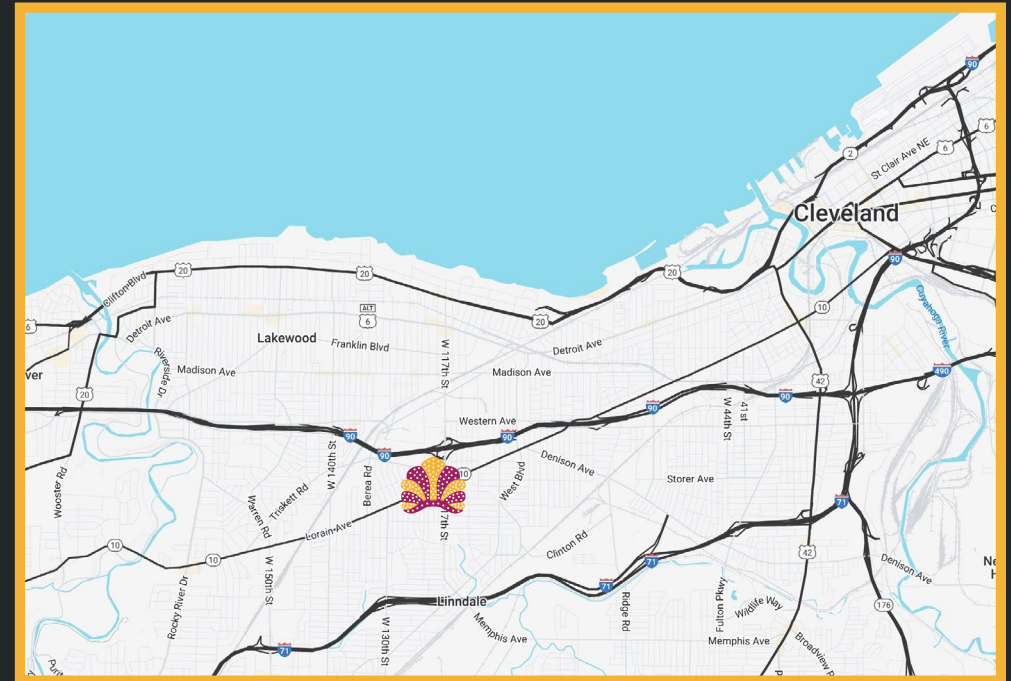


# Demographics

2024	1 Mile	5 Miles	15 Min Drive
Population	23,130	315,120	394,870
Households	9,487	147,298	184,514
Avg. HH Income	\$61,451	\$85,149	\$81,998
Median Age	34.6	37.7	37.8
Businesses	753	11,544	18,593
Employees	6,915	131,932	257,175



# Location



## At a Glance

- High profile revitalization or redevelopment opportunity of The Variety Theater, featuring a 20,675 square foot auditorium, multiple retail suites fronting Lorain Avenue and second floor apartments, totaling ~33,323 SF.
- Located in the lively Jefferson neighborhood of Cleveland, near the corner of Lorain Avenue and West 117th Street (nearly 30,000 VPD).
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Convenient access to I-90 (nearly 130,000 VPD).
- \$1.4 Million available in state-funded grants.

**Asking Price: \$850,000**



# Retail Units

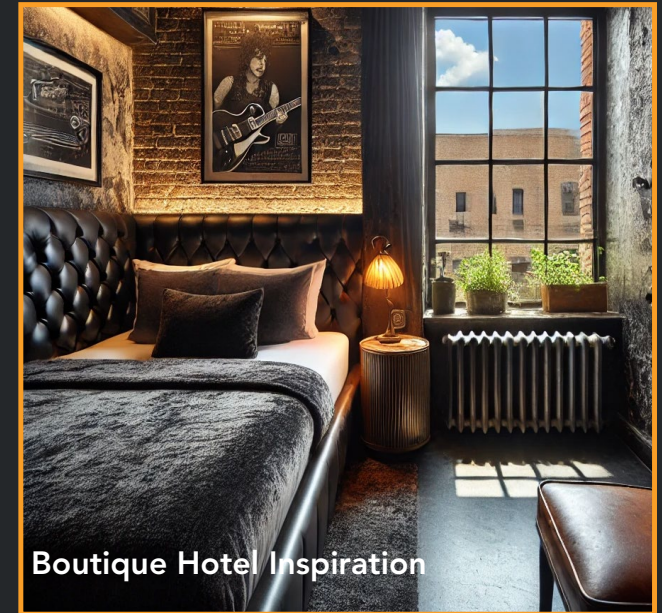


- **Five Retail Storefronts:** +/- 6,455 SF of versatile space.
- **Prime Visibility:** Excellent frontage on Lorain Avenue with nearly 30,000 vehicles per day (VPD).
- **Flexible Layouts:** Storefronts can be combined to create larger continuous spaces.
- **Ideal Opportunities:** Perfect for a coffee shop, restaurant, record store, or other boutique retail.



# Studio Apartments

- **12 Studio Apartments:** Located on the second floor, offering flexible living or commercial options, totaling +/- 6,821 SF.
- **Independent Access:** Features a separate entrance for tenant privacy and convenience.
- **Versatile Uses:** Suitable for affordable studio apartment rentals or creative repurposing. Previously used as green rooms for cast and performers.
- **Boutique Hotel Potential:** An excellent opportunity to convert into a unique hospitality space.
- **Private Green Room:** Includes a separate green room with a kitchen and bathroom, accessible through a private entrance on W 118th.



# Theater

- **Original Design:** 20,675 SF (4,242 SF is mezzanine) with a capacity for 1,900 patrons, including a 350-seat balcony, an orchestra pit, and Kimball Organ.
- **Transformational Potential:** Can be transformed into a state-of-the-art performing arts venue and event space, with a focus on live music, performing arts (dance, comedy, theater), and private events such as weddings, conferences, and community gatherings.



# Timeline & History

## 1927

- November 24: The Variety Theater opens at 11817 Lorain Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio.
- Designed by Nicola Petti in the Spanish Gothic style, the theater features a seating capacity of approximately 1,900, a Kimball organ, and an orchestra pit.
- The Variety Theater begins showcasing vaudeville performances and silent films, becoming a cornerstone of the neighborhood's cultural life.

## 1929

- Warner Brothers acquires the theater, transforming it into a first-run movie house.
- The Variety Theater becomes one of Cleveland's busiest cinemas on the west side.
- The theater hosts community events, including Christmas parties and special appearances by film stars.

## 1933

- Variety Theater in January 1933 where Julius Lamm has called on the local high school to help promote the film, "Touchdown."



## 1953

- A tornado damages the vertical 1927 marquee sign, forcing its removal.

## 1954

- Warner Brothers sells the Variety Theater for \$500,000 to local realtors.
- It becomes home to the Community Circuit Theaters Company, which operates it until 1976.

## 1976-1983

- Russell Koz purchases the property with a vision to revitalize the theater.
- Due to its age and previous poor repairs, the building requires extensive maintenance and restoration.
- Koz ran the theater as a second run theater until the early 1980s before switching over to a music venue, featuring rock and roll bands like R.E.M., the Dead Kennedys, Stevie Ray Vaughan, INXS, Metallica, Slayer, and Queensryche.
- The theater earns a reputation for loud, energetic performances that irritate nearby residents.



## 1984

- During a Motörhead concert, the volume reaches 130 decibels, causing plaster to fall from the ceiling, earning the band the title "Loudest Band on Earth."



## 1986

- After numerous complaints from neighbors regarding noise, safety, and loitering, the Variety Theater is closed to concerts.

## 1987-1990

- The theater space is rented to the Cleveland Wrestleplex, a wrestling gym.

## 1990-Present

- Multiple owners attempt to redevelop and restore the property.
- In 2016, a replica of the original marquee is installed.



# THE VARIETY THEATER

11815-11837 Lorain Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44111

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